

84TH CONGRESS }  
2d Session }

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES }

REPORT  
No. 2374

## AUTHORIZING THE CONVEYANCE OF CERTAIN PROPERTY TO THE COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO

JUNE 18, 1956.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. DURHAM, from the Committee on Armed Services, submitted the following

### R E P O R T

[To accompany H. R. 9506]

The Committee on Armed Services, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 9506) to provide for the conveyance of La Puntilla Military Reservation, San Juan, P. R., to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, having considered the same, report favorably thereon with amendment and recommend that the bill, as amended, do pass.

The amendment is as follows:

Page 1, line 6, strike the period and add the following language:

but on condition that the property will be maintained by the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico as a historic monument.

#### EXPLANATION OF AMENDMENT

The amendment requires the maintenance of Pa Puntilla as a historic monument. This is consistent with the actual use which is proposed for the property.

#### PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of the bill is to authorize and direct the Secretary of the Army to convey 3.24 acres of land together with improvements thereon known as La Puntilla Military Reservation in the city of San Juan, P. R., to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico without monetary consideration therefor.

## HISTORY OF LA PUNTILLA

The land comprising La Puntilla Military Reservation was acquired by the United States under the Treaty of Paris, and after being reserved initially for naval purposes by Presidential proclamation, dated June 26, 1903 (33 Stat. 2314), was assigned to the War Department by Presidential proclamation, dated January 26, 1912 (37 Stat. 1725). The original reservation of the lands for naval purposes included substantially all of the peninsula extending into the harbor on the south side of the city of San Juan. However, today the reservation, which is located in an important commercial district of San Juan, consists of the land described in section 2 of H. R. 9506.

## USE OF PROPERTY BY COMMONWEALTH

The western 1.94 acres of the reservation have been occupied by the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico under a license granted by the Secretary of War on November 15, 1913, and the two buildings located in the area are used by the printing office and the department of labor of the Commonwealth.

## OTHER USE OF PROPERTY

The other noncontiguous areas in the northeast corner and in the southeast corner, respectively, were used as a part of Fort Brooke Military Reservation for various military purposes, principally as offices and for storage until after World War II. Since July 1951, these areas have been used by the Coast Guard in conjunction with its use of the 1.31 acres identified in the last lines of the bill. The remaining buildings are over 100 years old.

## CURRENT STATUS OF PROPERTY

La Puntilla Military Reservation is excess to the needs of the Department of Defense, and the Department of the Army proposed to the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate and of the House of Representatives, respectively, in accordance with provisions of section 601 of the act of Congress approved September 28, 1951 (65 Stat. 365), that the Department be authorized to report the installation to the General Services Administration as excess property. The Senate Committee on Armed Services has agreed to this proposal.

## VIEWS OF THE COMMITTEE

The hearings held by the Armed Services Committee on this bill clearly indicated that the most important use to which this property could be put is as a historic monument and, after rehabilitation by the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, as a location for the display of the arts and crafts of Puerto Rico. The committee also came to the conclusion that the legal situation with respect to this property has now become so entangled as to require legislative action in order to insure that title to it is vested in the Commonwealth. Any other course of action, in the opinion of the committee, might well merely perpetuate the situation which now exists.

The Coast Guard very recently evinced interest in the property which is the subject of this bill for use as a site for the construction of Capehart housing. However, the Coast Guard already has under its control what constitutes in Puerto Rico a considerable area of land, and the committee did not feel, in any event, that the Coast Guard should expand its activities in this particular area, especially in view of the historic value of La Puntilla and the need to raze it if housing units were to be built. If additional land is, indeed, required by the Coast Guard, such is available in other areas in close proximity to their present operating area.

## FISCAL DATA

Enactment into law of this measure will not involve the expenditure of any Federal funds.

## DEPARTMENTAL DATA

Neither the Department of the Army nor the Bureau of the Budget has any objection to disposition of this property as is evidenced by letters dated May 2 and June 15, 1956, which are set out below and made a part of this report. The views of the Treasury Department are contained in letter dated June 15, 1956, which is also set out below and made a part of this report.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY,  
*Washington, D. C., May 2, 1956.*

HON. CARL VINSON,  
*Chairman, Committee on Armed Services,  
House of Representatives.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Reference is made to your request to the Secretary of Defense for the views of the Department of Defense with respect to H. R. 9506, 84th Congress, a bill to provide for the conveyance of La Puntilla Military Reservation, San Juan, P. R., to to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The Secretary of Defense has delegated to the Department of the Army the responsibility for expressing the views of the Department of Defense thereon.

The purpose of the bill is to authorize and direct the Secretary of the Army to convey 3.24 acres of land together with improvements thereon known as La Puntilla Military Reservation in the city of San Juan, P. R., to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico without monetary consideration therefor.

The Department of the Army on behalf of the Department of Defense has considered the above-mentioned bill and recommends that action on the bill be deferred.

The land comprising La Puntilla Military Reservation was acquired by the United States under the Treaty of Paris, and after being reserved initially for naval purposes by Presidential proclamation, dated June 26, 1903 (33 Stat. 2314), was assigned to the War Department by Presidential proclamation, dated January 26, 1912, (37 Stat. 1725). The original reservation of the lands for naval purposes included substantially all of the peninsula extending into the harbor on the south side of the city of San Juan. However, today the reservation, which is located in an important commercial district of San

Juan, consists of the land described in section 2 of H. R. 9506. The western 1.94 acres of the reservation have been occupied by the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico under a license granted by the Secretary of War on November 15, 1913, and the two buildings located in the area are used by the printing office and the department of labor of the Commonwealth. Two other noncontiguous areas in the northeast corner and in the southeast corner, respectively, were used as a part of Fort Brooke Military Reservation for various military purposes, principally as offices and for storage until after World War II. Since July 1951 these areas have been used by the Coast Guard in conjunction with its use of the 1.31 acres identified in lines 12 through 16, page 3 of the bill. The remaining buildings are over 100 years old.

La Puntilla Military Reservation is excess to the needs of the Department of Defense, and the Department of the Army has proposed to the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate and of the House of Representatives, respectively, in accordance with provisions of section 601 of the act of Congress approved September 28, 1951 (65 Stat. 365), that the Department be authorized to report the installation to the General Services Administration as excess property. The Senate Committee on Armed Services has agreed to this proposal. If the House committee also agrees, the Department of the Army, under delegated authority from the General Services Administration, will determine whether any requirement exists for its use by any other Federal agency. If no Federal requirement for its use is found, the Department of the Army will proceed with its disposal as surplus property in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. In the meantime, the Department of the Army has presented to the General Services Administration and to the Office of Territories, Department of the Interior, the question as to whether the property may be transferred to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico in accordance with section 7 of the act of Congress approved March 2, 1917 (39 Stat. 954), as continued in force and effect by section 4 of the act of July 3, 1950 (64 Stat. 319). In the event it is determined that the property can be conveyed to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico under the provisions of this act, the objective of H. R. 9506 could be achieved without its enactment. Therefore, it is recommended that action on this bill be deferred.

Enactment of this measure will not involve the expenditure of any Department of Defense funds.

This report has been coordinated within the Department of Defense in accordance with procedures prescribed by the Secretary of Defense.

Inasmuch as the committee has requested that the report be expedited, it is submitted without a determination by the Bureau of the Budget as to whether or not it conforms to the program of the President. As soon as such advice is received it will be forwarded to your committee.

Sincerely yours,

WILBER M. BRUCKER,  
*Secretary of the Army.*



JUNE 15, 1956.

Hon. CARL VINSON,

*Chairman, Committee on Armed Services,**House of Representatives.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Reference is made to the letter of May 2, 1956, from the Secretary of the Army to you, expressing the views of the Department of Defense with respect to H. R. 9506, 84th Congress, a bill to provide for the conveyance of La Puntilla Military Reservation, San Juan, P. R., to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

Inasmuch as the committee had requested that action be expedited, the report was submitted to the committee without a determination by the Bureau of the Budget as to whether it conformed to the program of the President.

This is to inform you that the Bureau of the Budget, on June 14, 1956, advised the Department of the Army that it had no objection to the report submitted to you on May 2, 1956, but that it was suggested that the committee may wish to obtain the views of the General Services Administration concerning the matter.

Sincerely,

J. E. BASTION, Jr.,

*Brigadier General, GS, Deputy Chief for Operations.*

C. J. HAUCK, Jr.,

*Brigadier General, GS, Chief of Legislative Liaison.*

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TREASURY DEPARTMENT,  
Washington, June 15, 1956.

Hon. CARL VINSON,

*Chairman, Committee on Armed Services,**House of Representatives, Washington, D. C.*

MY DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Reference is made to H. R. 9506, to provide for the conveyance of La Puntilla Military Reservation, San Juan, P. R., to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, which has been referred to your committee.

The purpose of the bill is to authorize and direct the Secretary of the Army to convey to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico by quitclaim deed, without monetary consideration, certain property in the city of San Juan, P. R., comprising part of La Puntilla Military Reservation.

The property sought to be conveyed is adjacent to the Coast Guard base at San Juan, P. R. The Coast Guard at present has a permit from the Corps of Engineers, Department of the Army, to use two parcels of land included in the tract to be conveyed by the bill and making up about half of it. The Bureau of Customs has been given permission to use, by a subpermit from the Coast Guard, one of the included parcels of land. The permit from the Army expires on June 30, 1956; however, the Coast Guard has requested a renewal thereof.

By the enactment of the Housing Amendments of 1955 the Coast Guard has been authorized to participate in the construction of Capehart housing. There is a need for housing in the San Juan area for officers and men stationed at the Coast Guard base and assigned to vessels berthing at the base. The property that would be conveyed

by the bill is considered the best site for such housing. Plans for the housing have not been finally approved. However, acquisition of a site is the first step toward construction of housing.

In view of the use presently being made by the Coast Guard of the property which would be conveyed, and its potential use as a site for Coast Guard housing, the Treasury Department is opposed to the enactment of H. R. 9506.

The Bureau of the Budget has advised that there would be no objection to the submission of this report and has suggested that your committee may wish to obtain the views of the General Services Administration with respect to the proposed legislation.

Very truly yours,

DAVID W. KENDALL,  
*Acting Secretary of the Treasury.*

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